

Chart IV
The 1830 Book of Mormon Chronology Related to the Time of the Messiah's Birth

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1. In a dream, Lehi was blessed by the Lord for his faithfulness in declaring the Lord's message. The Lord warned Lehi of a plot on his life and commanded him to take his family and depart into the wilderness (1 Nephi 2:1-2; see item 5 in Chart II and item 7 in Chart III.)
2. Lehi gathered his wife, sons, provisions and tents. The family left their house at Jerusalem and their land in the kingdom of Judah, and traveled in the wilderness down to the borders of the Red Sea and then three days' journey further south by the Red Sea until they came to a valley with a river where they established a base camp (1 Nephi 2:4-10; see item 6 in Chart II and item 8 in Chart III.)
3. After Ishmael's family joined Lehi's family in the wilderness (1 Nephi 7; see items 15-18 in Chart II and items 18-21 in Chart III), Lehi had a dream of the tree of life that caused him to fear for the salvation of his two elder sons, Laman and Lemuel. He recounted the dream to his followers and urged his sons to keep the commandments of the Lord (1 Nephi 8). He also prophesied that a long period, even 600 years, would intervene between his escape from Jerusalem and the time when God would raise up a Messiah among the Jews (1 Nephi 10:1-4).
4. Lehi and his sons, Nephi and Jacob, experienced revelations and prophesied about this Messiah (e.g., 1 Nephi 1:5-19; 2:18-24; 10:2-14; 11:6-7, 24-33; 2 Nephi 2:1-30; 11:2-4). Through such revelatory communications and prophecies in the brass plates, the believers knew of his mother (e.g., 1 Nephi 11:8-23; 2 Nephi 17:14; Isaiah 7:14; compare Alma 7:10) and of the prophet who would be his forerunner (e.g., 1 Nephi 10:5-10; Isaiah 40:3; 2 Nephi 31:4-8); they knew he would suffer, be killed and redeem his people (e.g., 1 Nephi 19:10, 12, 16; 2 Nephi 25:12-19). Nephi and, eventually, others knew the name by which the Messiah would come to be known (1 Nephi 12:16-18 ["Jesus Christ," rather than "the Messiah," appears in the 1830 edition and original manuscript]; 2 Nephi 10:3; 25:19).
5. While keeping the law of Moses, which was available on the brass plates and pointed to the coming Messiah (e.g., 1 Nephi 4:16; 2 Nephi 5:10; 25:24; Jacob 4:5-6; Jarom 1:5; Alma 25:15; 30:3; 34:14; Helaman 13:1; 3 Nephi 1:24-25), the followers of Lehi organized and taught what they knew as the doctrine of Christ (e.g., 1 Nephi 15:14; 2 Nephi 31:2-32:6; Jacob 7:1-23; Alma 41:9; Helaman 11:22-23; 3 Nephi 2:2). An important part of that doctrine was Lehi's 600-year prophecy (1 Nephi 10:4; 19:8; 2 Nephi 25:19; 3 Nephi 1:1).
6. A holy order consisting of prophets, teachers and priests was established to maintain and teach the doctrine of Christ, prophesy and measure the passage of time in Lehi's 600-year prophecy (e.g., 2 Nephi 5:26; 6:2; Jacob 1:6; 4:15; Enos 1:22-23; Jarom 1:11; Words of Mormon 1:16-18; Alma 4:20; 5:11, 44, 54; 7:22; 8:20; 13; 20:15; 43:2; 49:30; Helaman, preface; 3 Nephi 1:13, 26; 7:25; compare 1 Nephi 17:4; 2 Nephi 5:28 with Jacob 1:1; Enos 1:25; Mosiah 6:4; 29:46; 3 Nephi 2:6).
7. This holy order prophesied that the descendants of Lehi would know of the Messiah's birth and death by signs and wonders and the visitation of angels (e.g., 1 Nephi 19:10; 2 Nephi 25:12-13; 26:3-8; Alma 13:22-26; Helaman 14:2-6, 20-29; 3 Nephi 8:1-4); and they

prophesied that he would appear to some of their descendants after his resurrection and others would hear his voice (e.g., 1 Nephi 12:1-6; 19:7-12; 2 Nephi 26:1, 9).

8. Lehi's followers and, eventually, the holy order of prophets counted time from Lehi's departure from Jerusalem. The earliest extant measurements of the passage of time recorded by Nephi refer to Lehi and his followers as "we" (1 Nephi 17:4; 2 Nephi 5:28), but eventually the year-count was anchored formally in Lehi's prophecy (e.g., Jacob 1:1; Enos 1:25; Mosiah 6:4; 29:46; 3 Nephi 2:6).
9. The earliest record in Mormon's extant writings of the Nephite year-count appears in connection with the enthronement of a king named Mosiah, who would be the last of the kings of "this people, or the people of Zarahemla, and the people of Mosiah [the new king's grandfather] who dwell in the land" (Mosiah 1:10). Mosiah began to reign when "four hundred and seventy-six years" had passed away from the time Lehi left Jerusalem (Mosiah 6:4). Near the time of Mosiah's death, his sons all refused to succeed him on the throne and they obtained his permission to undertake a mission to the Lamanites (Mosiah 27:32-28:10).
10. King Mosiah then inaugurated the reign of judges "among all the people who were called the Nephites" (Mosiah 29:1-44, 46). After Mosiah's death, Mormon recorded that 509 years had come to an end from the time Lehi left Jerusalem (Mosiah 29:46).
11. Throughout the 86th year of the reign of the judges, the Nephites continued in their wickedness, despite the work of a prophet named Nephi (Helaman 13:1; 16:1, 3-5, 9). The Lamanites who had been converted by the sons of king Mosiah (e.g., Alma 21:19-23; 23:4-5) strictly observed the commandments of God and looked forward to Christ (Alma 25:15-17; Helaman 13:1).
12. During the 86th year, a Lamanite prophet named Samuel came into the land of Zarahemla and preached many days, but he was rejected and cast out. Prompted by the Lord, he returned to the Zarahemla, where he was prohibited from entering the city. He climbed onto its wall and then prophesied "with a loud voice" the words put into his heart by the Lord, some of which had been delivered to him by an angel (Helaman 13:2-15:17).
13. Samuel prophesied that the Nephites would know of the time when the Messiah was born from three specific signs: (1) five more years would pass away; (2) in the night before his birth, the night would not be darkened; and (3) a new star would arise "such an one as ye never have beheld" (Helaman 14:2-5). Samuel also prophesied a general element related to the three specific signs; there would be "many signs and wonders in heaven" (Helaman 14:6).
14. Most of the Nephites near the wall did not believe the words of Samuel and they attempted to capture and kill him. He jumped from the wall, fled from the land of Zarahemla and returned to his own land where he ministered among his own people (Helaman 16:2, 6-8). The 86th year of the judges ended after the departure of Samuel (Helaman 16:9).
15. The 87th through 89th years of the judges passed away with the majority of the Nephites remaining in pride and wickedness (Helaman 16:10-12).
16. In the 90th year of the judges, great signs, wonders and miracles began to signal the fulfillment of the words of the prophets. Angels appeared to wise men to declare glad tidings of great joy. Still, only the most faithful part of the people gave credence to these events.

The unbelievers denied even that a redeemer was necessary and relied on rumors, falsehoods and contention to foment the overthrow of the church (Helaman 16:13-24).

17. During the 91st year of the judges, the Nephite prophet named Nephi (who was a contemporary with Samuel, the Lamanite prophet) gave up his church and record keeping responsibilities. He delivered the records and responsibilities to his son, also name Nephi. The elder Nephi then departed out of the land and disappeared. The younger Nephi took up his duties and began to lead the church (Helaman 16:25; 3 Nephi preface, 1:1-3; 2:9).
18. The 92nd year of the judges began and then the 600th year since Lehi's departure from Jerusalem came to an end (3 Nephi 1:1).
19. During the commencement of the 92nd year of the judges, the enemies of the church began to claim that Samuel's prophecy had failed because too much time had passed and the prophesied signs had not occurred. The dispute continued to grow, with the unbelievers creating a great uproar throughout the land. The faithful continued to rejoice in the great signs and miracles wrought among them and to watch steadfastly for the signs prophesied by Samuel. The unbelievers then planned to carry out a vicious purge, with both religious and political implications, if the signs had not appeared by "a day set apart" (3 Nephi 1:4-9).
20. When Nephi learned of the murderous plan of the enemies of the church, he "went out and bowed himself down upon the earth, and cried mightily to his God ... all that day" for those who were threatened with destruction because of their faith in the doctrine of Christ (3 Nephi 1:10-12). Before nightfall, the voice of the Lord revealed to him that the time was at hand, the sign would be given that night and, on the morrow, the Messiah would be born (3 Nephi 1:12-14). That night the sun set, but it was not dark; instead, it was as light "as though it was mid-day" and "there was no darkness in all that night" (3 Nephi 1:15-18).
21. On the day then recognized (from the sign that had appeared) as the one in which the Lord would be born, the sun rose in the morning "according to its proper order." That night and perhaps for many more nights the new star was visible "according to the word," indicating that it was not a conjunction of planets moving in their "proper order" (3 Nephi 1:19-21). That is, the new star was seen after the Messiah's birth, as Nephi had prophesied (2 Nephi 26:3), and it was "such an one as ye never have beheld," according to the word of Samuel (Helaman 14:5).
22. Immediately following the night without darkness and the appearance of the new star, the enemies of the church began to spread lies about the signs. They sought to deceive the people about the meaning of the signs and wonders that had been seen (3 Nephi 1:22). However, Nephi and "many others" of the holy order went among the people, preaching and baptizing. The majority of the people were "converted unto the Lord" and peace returned to the land (3 Nephi 1:22-23).
23. Following the appearance of the signs, some in the church began to teach that it was no longer necessary to abide by the law of Moses. This brief dispute was quickly and peacefully ended and the remainder of the 92nd year passed away in peace, with the people happy because of the appearance of the signs in accordance with "the words of the prophecy of all the holy prophets" (3 Nephi 1:24-26).
24. In the 93rd year of the judges, the Nephites apparently enjoyed peace among themselves, but Gadianton robbers began to infest the land, committing many murders (3 Nephi 1:27).

The robbers were joined by some dissenting Nephites and young Lamanites in the 94th year; so, the attacks by the robbers began to increase greatly (3 Nephi 1:28-30).

25. Throughout the 95th year of the judges, Nephites continued to fall away from the church, forgetting the signs and wonders “which they had heard” and losing their astonishment “at a sign or a wonder from heaven” (3 Nephi 2:1). Some, who were deceived by their own imaginations and the church’s detractors, returned to their wickedness and abominations (3 Nephi 2:1-3).
26. The Nephites continued to dwindle in unbelief throughout the 96th through the 100th years of the judges (3 Nephi 2:4-5). In the 101st year of the judges, the Nephites changed their official year-count to recognize the occurrence of the signs of the birth of the Messiah (3 Nephi 2:5-8). This change was inaugurated after: (1) the 100th year from the death of Mosiah had passed (3 Nephi 2:5); (2) the 609th year from Lehi’s escape had passed (3 Nephi 2:6); and (3) “nine years had passed away from the time when the sign was given” (3 Nephi 2:7-8).